

News Release

Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wildlife Refuge Plans Middle Island Deer Management Hunt

Hunter Pre-Registration to Begin Oct. 16

Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge will sponsor a special deer management hunt on Middle Island near St. Marys during a three day period beginning November 30. According to Refuge Manager Dean Rhine, deer hunters will be allowed to use shotguns (slugs only) or traditional muzzleloaders on the island for the first time since the refuge acquired the property in 1995. Archery hunting will also be permitted.

Rhine said that increasing deer densities on the 240-acre island are harming native vegetation and interfering with tree planting success. An island deer census in May of 2006 yielded 60 deer before fawning. That density is about four times over the density desired for healthy deer and wildlife habitat. The refuge estimates that a 50% reduction in the deer herd on the island is needed the first year to meet its habitat management objectives.

Pre-registered hunters will be assigned to twenty-six elevated deer stand locations on the island. Three will be designated for physically challenged hunters, six for archery only, and seventeen for gun hunting. The refuge will provide accessible platforms for disabled hunters and four ladder-type stands. The remaining sites require hunters to bring their own self-climbing tree stands.

Hunt stand sites will be available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning October 16 by applying in person at refuge headquarters at 3004 7th Street in Parkersburg, or by calling the refuge at (304) 422-0752 during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Maps of the island, stand locations, and more specific hunt information will be available at that time. Reservations for the hunt will be assigned for one-day only.

During the three day period of the hunt, other public uses of the island will not be allowed. Regular use of the island will resume on December 3, including archery deer hunting within a specific zoned area.

In addition to the refuge's special deer management hunt on Middle Island, opportunities to hunt waterfowl, rabbit and squirrel, and archery deer hunting are available on other refuge properties during appropriate state seasons. Although there is no fee for participation in refuge hunting, hunters must possess a refuge hunt permit and appropriate state hunting licenses while hunting on refuge lands. Hunters are also urged to complete a refuge hunt survey at the end of their hunt season.

Hunting is one of six priority public uses identified by Congress as appropriate activities, when compatible, within the National Wildlife Refuge System. Established in 1990 to protect and restore habitat for migratory birds and endangered species, the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge offers all six of these uses, including fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation.

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